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-NEWS RELEASE-

BYSIEWICZ: HUNDREDS OF NEW POLL WORKERS TRAINED AND READY FOR 2008 ELECTIONS; WILL BE DEPLOYED STATEWIDE

SECRETARY OF THE STATE LEADS EFFORTS TO ENGAGE NEW CORPS OF POLL
WORKERS FOR COMMUNITIES MOST IN NEED

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz announced today that hundreds of new poll workers have completed training for the 2008 General Election and will be deployed in precincts throughout the state on Election Day, November 4th. Workers will be assigned primarily to the cities of Bridgeport and Hartford but also to other communities statewide. At least 250 of the poll workers are students trained at 6 colleges in a program led and organized through Secretary Bysiewicz's office.

"In just 4 days, Connecticut voters will go to the polls to cast ballots in record numbers," said Bysiewicz. "We are ready and polling places will be staffed by well-trained poll workers. These workers will get a fantastic learning experience about how the democratic process works and will be helping to oversee its basic function – the vote."

Students at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, Capitol Community College in Hartford, the UCONN School of Social Work in West Hartford, Manchester Community College, Middlesex Community College in Middletown and Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven all participated in the poll worker training programs. With the exception of Middlesex Community College and Southern Connecticut State University, the training classes for student poll workers were all organized and led by local registrars and the Secretary of the State's office.

Middlesex Community College and Southern Connecticut State University received federal grants totaling \$40,000 from the Election Assistance Commission to conduct poll worker training programs for students who attend those institutions.

Bysiewicz added, “Recruiting poll workers is a challenge, and there is a perennial shortage of motivated, qualified poll workers in our state. I like to call the college poll-worker training program a win-win-win. First, it engages our young people in the Democratic process; second, it provides highly competent, energetic young poll-workers for communities throughout our state; third, cities or towns will be reimbursed by state and federal dollars for the cost of hiring those poll-workers on Election Day who participated in the college training program.”

As part of their preparation to be poll workers, the students were trained on:

- How to set up a polling place and run the optical scan ballot tabulators
- Correct Voter ID requirements
- Voter rights, responsibilities and privacy protections
- How to operate and administer the vote-by-phone system
- The different types of poll workers and their responsibilities (Ballot Clerk, Registrar, Assistant Moderator, Tabulator Tender, Demonstrator, Official Checker)
- How to manage the expected large turnout
- Assisting and managing voter inquiries
- Proper procedures for closing the polling place and counting the ballots

Polls will be open on Election Day from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and the poll workers start their shifts at 5:15 a.m. Poll workers are expected to stay at the polling place until the equipment is closed down at the end of the night and all the ballots are counted and reported to local officials. Poll workers are paid according to the task they are assigned and that pay varies in different communities. For instance, a “Demonstrator” in Hartford is paid \$145 for working on Election Day.

“I applaud the leadership shown by registrars teaming up with local colleges to train more poll workers for Election Day,” said Bysiewicz. “I would encourage any towns who have not taken advantage of that program to get in touch with schools in your area because we could always use more poll workers. If you are a student, think about the incredible civics lesson in managing real ballots cast by real voters – and getting paid for it!”

Professor Joanne Anzelberger, who teaches Criminal Justice and American Government and organized the training program at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport said, “My students are enthusiastic about becoming poll workers and are eager to get a ground floor look at how democracy really works. I applaud the Secretary of the State’s office for having the vision and leadership to encourage our state’s young people to participate in true public service.”

Bridgeport Registrar of Voters Santa Ayala said, “It is essential to have well-trained, highly motivated, reliable poll workers that will result in a successful election on November 4th. Poll workers are the foundation in how our ballots are cast. The college student poll worker training program is an investment in our future; it goes a long way towards ensuring we will have a good supply of competent poll workers for years to come.”